



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Turkmenistan: Moscow Mechanism Report

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Douglas A. Davidson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 13, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In addition to subscribing fully to the statement read on behalf of the ten states that invoked the Moscow Mechanism read by the distinguished Austrian Ambassador, I should like to say the following in my national capacity.

Like others at this table, the United States is deeply concerned by the events that have taken place in Turkmenistan since November 25. Regrettably, the Turkmen reply to Professor Decaux's thorough report has not alleviated our concerns.

As the Austrian Ambassador noted, the Moscow Mechanism report should serve as a point of departure for future cooperation between Turkmenistan and the OSCE. The report contains a wealth of constructive recommendations whose implementation would help steer Turkmenistan out of its self-imposed isolation and back onto the path of full integration in the international community.

The OSCE and the international community must remain focussed on Turkmenistan and the concerns raised in professor Decaux's report. The international community must continue to remain engaged with Turkmen civil society to encourage its development.

I should like to pose a question to the Turkmen delegation. It is this: Your government has, on repeated occasions, signaled its willingness to continue cooperating with the OSCE. Foreign Minister Meredov made this point explicitly when he visited Vienna in January. Since your Government has said it will cooperate with the OSCE, my government would like to know one thing: How?

Given what Turkmen government representatives have said, we feel this is a fair question that merits a thoughtful response. As a first step toward continued cooperation between Turkmenistan and the OSCE, I would like to suggest a few areas rich with possibilities.

To begin, Turkmenistan could cooperate with the OSCE on full implementation of its international commitments – including those with the OSCE. Special attention should be paid to commitments protecting human rights, prohibiting torture, and upholding the rule of law. On an urgent basis, Turkmenistan should allow access by family members, lawyers, the ICRC and NGOs to all prisoners, regardless of the charges on which they are held.

Turkmenistan could usefully cooperate with the OSCE on legal and judicial review. This should include – but not be limited to – review of the trials related to the events of November

25. In our view, this could be accomplished either by appeal or through new trials, with all proceedings open to the public, including NGOs and international observers.

As part of this legal review, Turkmenistan should repeal the reimposition of exit visas and the draconian "Betrayers of the Motherland" law. As we noted just a few weeks ago, this new treason law permits sentences of up to life in prison for a broad range of vaguely defined so-called offenses, some of which are protected as part of commitments made by Turkmenistan as a participating State in the OSCE.

Reversing other steps taken recently by the Turkmen authorities, such as property confiscation and forced resettlement, could be addressed as part of this cooperation.

Mr. Chairman, the United States would be delighted to see closer cooperation between Turkmenistan and the OSCE on a range of issues. We have long stated our preference that Turkmenistan increase its integration in the world community, not deepen its isolation. We have made some suggestions and Professor Decaux's report contains even more. The offer for cooperation has been extended – it is time for Turkmenistan to make good on its promise to accept.

Thank you.